DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 071 217 EC 050 389

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| TITLE | Suggested Solutions to Problems Teachers Encounter with their Gifted Students. |
| INSTITUTION | Minnesota State Dept. of Education, St. Paul. Div. of Instruction. |
| PUB DATE | 72 |
| NOTE | 91p. |
| EDRS PRICE | MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29 |
| DESCRIPTORS | *Class Activities; *Exceptional Child Education; Exceptional Students; *Gifted; Intelligence Differences; Parent Attitudes; Problem Solving; Regular Class Placement; *Social Adjustment; Study Habits; Teacher Role; *Teaching Methods |

ABSTRACT

Numerous problems which teachers may have with gifted students in their classes are listed and several possible solutions are suggested in outline form for each problem. Problems covered are of six types: intellectual problems of individual gifted students (arising from abilities superior to those of their classmates); study habit problems of gifted students, social problems of gifted students; parental problems; intellectual and social problems of groups of gifted students (small groups of gifted students in regular classes); and staff relationship problems of teachers of gifted students. The solutions suggested to the various problems caused by the presence of a gifted student in a regular class are intended to serve teachers as catalysts in developing other, personalized solutions. (KW)

ED 071217

Suggested Solutions

to

# PROBLEMS TEACHERS ENCOUNTER WITH THEIR GIFTED STUDENTS

EC 050 389 E

State of Minnesota
Department of Education
Division of Instruction
Elementary and Secondary
Code: XXXVIII-B-371
St Paul: 1972

# FOREWORD

Although there are over one hundred definitions of "a gifted person" in use today the following definition will be used throughout this publication:

> *A gifted student is one who possesses intellectual, creative, aesthetic, leadership or other qualities so superior to his peers that he requires an education which is different from that received by his peers.*

In my experience as Consultant for the Gifted with the Minnesota State Department of Education, I have noted that each of the problems cited in this publication has been of deep concern to a substantial number of teachers and administrators.

Hopefully, the solutions suggested will serve as catalysts for developing <u>your</u> own solutions for <u>your</u> gifted students in <u>your</u> school.

Lorraine Hertz

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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# SECTION ONE

# INTELLECTUAL PROBLEMS

# OF

# INDIVIDUAL GIFTED STUDENTS

## PROBLEM

A gifted high school student wants to start college instead of completing his senior year.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Encourage him to visit classes at a nearby college if possible.

2. If student is a junior encourage him to take a night school class or attend summer school at a college if possible.

3. If his parents agree to this step, make arrangements for student to take college entrance tests and follow through.

4. It might be desirable for an alternative plan to be developed so that he can return to high school if his initial college experiences are not satisfactory.

5. Be sure that the student and his family realize that he cannot be granted a high school diploma unless he meets all requirements.

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## PROBLEM

A gifted student's creative thinking ability is far superior to that of his classmates.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. The teacher could teach the class how to do Creative Problem Solving and then urge the class members to use this approach in their work.

2. The student should be given many opportunities to develop and implement his own ideas whenever possible.

3. The student could be encouraged to work with groups of students who are working on projects that stimulate creative thinking.

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## PROBLEM

A gifted student's creative writing ability is far superior to that of his classmates.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Provide many opportunities for student to write. Perhaps he could substitute a creative writing assignment for another one occasionally.

2. Initiate a class newspaper or magazine project so that those who enjoy creative writing could do extensive work and have a finished project.

3. Arrangements might be made to start a school newspaper or magazine. It might be an after-school club.

4. If the student is not yet in high school, the high school newspaper staff might consider his serving as a junior reporter.

5. He might be encouraged to write a play to be presented by his class.

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## PROBLEM

A gifted student's individual I.Q. reported by the psychologist is 160 and he is attending a school where the average I.Q. is in the low 100's.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Give diagnostic reading and math tests to help determine at what grade level he is able to function in those subjects.

2. Study the results of the diagnostic tests and his emotional and social maturity in order to decide if he should do advanced work in certain subjects or if he should be double-promoted or if there are opportunities for his assigned teacher to provide an appropriate education for him.

3. Plan for the student to spend some time with a group of children close to his mental ability in a non-graded activity or club such as Junior Great Books.

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## PROBLEM

The gifted student purposely enrolls in "easy" courses in order to ensure A's.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Encourage administration to give greater weighting to the grades in honors courses. Students are concerned with class rank and honor points when they are applying to colleges.

2. Counsel with student about the importance of various courses to their future plans.

3. Urge administration to urge teachers of honors courses to give grades on the basis of achievement rather than based on the curve. It may be possible that all of the students should earn A's or B's.

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## PROBLEM

A gifted student's achievement test scores are inconsistent with his tested I.Q.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Have student take another I.Q. test to rule out error.

2. Compare his achievement test scores with previous ones in order to decide whether to readminister the achievement tests.

3. Study the curriculum to determine whether there is sufficient academic challenge for him to use his intellectual ability.

4. Give him a chance to test out some of his classwork and then provide a chance for him to do advanced work.

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## PROBLEM

A gifted student's math ability is superior to that of his classmates.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Administer a diagnostic math test in order to determine what placement would be most suitable. Care must be taken that student is not required to do written work that is beyond his ability.

2. An opportunity should be given to the student to test out of units or math courses so that he can progress in math by taking advanced courses.

3. In certain cases individualized math programs might be used by this student.

4. Care should be taken that the student is not enrolled in a math class that is not challenging to him.

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PROBLEM

A gifted student attending a school with modular scheduling appears to be wasting his free time.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Discuss the situation with the student and ask him to keep a simple record of what he does in his free time.

2. Consult his teachers to find out how he is doing. If his assignments are too simple for his ability his teachers might be urged to assign him more appropriate things to do.

3. It may be what observers feel is wasted time is really very important for his personal development.

4. He might be encouraged to take an extra class during his free time.

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## PROBLEM

A gifted student's reading ability is superior to that of his classmates.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Administer a diagnostic reading test in order to have information on which to base a reading placement decision.

2. If student's social and emotional maturity are such that he can gain from placement in a reading class with students older than he, explore this possibility with administration and the classroom teacher who will be involved.

3. If classroom teacher has time it might be a good thing to have student have his own reading class. The disadvantage of this is that the student misses the fun of sharing his delight in reading with another child.

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## PROBLEM

A gifted student has the ability to read with an advanced class but is not able to complete accompanying written workbook assignments.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Coordinate reading schedules between classroom teacher and teacher who has his reading level group so that student has his phonics work with his classroom teacher and his oral reading and discussion with advanced teacher. He should not do any writing in a workbook until printing or writing are easy for him.

2. If he is in grades 4-6 his teacher might want to use the Self-Managing Reading Group Plan (available from L. Hertz, #638 Capitol Square, St. Paul, 55101) for a small group of able readers.

3. Investigate the Junior Great Books program for grades 3-9.

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## PROBLEM

A gifted student's science ability is superior to that of his classmates.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Give student many opportunities to conduct and design experiments that will provide additional depth to his understanding.

2. The student could benefit from designing and implementing a research study in a scientific area in which he is interested.

3. Non-graded science interest groups could be introduced into the elementary school day or as an after-school activity.

4. In the elementary school the student could be asked to design and conduct experiments for his class and for other classes, preferably with the cooperation of other students.

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PROBLEM

A gifted student's ability to comprehend and use social studies concepts is superior to his classmates.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Have students take unit test before beginning the unit to determine what activities he will work on. It's possible that he could spend his time on creative or research projects rather than the standard curriculum for the unit.

2. Many alternative assignments should be provided for the class including some which are extremely challenging.

3. A group of students might benefit from planning their own activities.

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## PROBLEM

A gifted student's spelling ability is far superior to that of his classmates.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Give him a chance to test out of spelling tests. One way might be to dictate the words for the coming two or more weeks and then requiring him to work only on the words he missed.

2. A group of able spellers could dictate to each other and learn how to administer their own spelling program.

3. If he consistently makes no or few spelling errors, his spelling period might well be used for different activities. These activities should be jointly planned by the student and his teacher.

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## PROBLEM

A gifted student has transferred in from a school where his education was at a much higher intellectual level than the one now being offered to his chronological peers.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Compare his achievement test results from his old school with those of his present classmates and with those in the next higher grade.

2. Use the results of the study in 1. (above) and an analysis of his social and emotional maturity and his parents' wishes to decide on an appropriate grade placement.

3. If the student is to remain with his chronological peers make every effort for him to have some of his classwork with students who are at his academic level (whether or not they are in his room or in an advanced grade.)

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# SECTION TWO

# STUDY HABIT PROBLEMS

# OF

# GIFTED STUDENTS

PROBLEM

The gifted student does not complete his assignments.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Re-examine his assignments in light of the evidence you have of his mental ability in the subject. If the assignments are not challenging for him give him some that are.

2. Perhaps his assignments should be shorter in length until he has learned to complete what is assigned.

3. A group of students could work on a plan of alternative assignments. It might be wise to have him on this committee.

4. Ask student for progress reports on long-range assignments.

5. Offer to help student when he gets bogged down on his assignments.

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## PROBLEM

The gifted student completes his assignments quickly and then often disturbs his classmates while he waits for them to finish.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Re-examine student's assignments to see if they can be made more challenging. Be careful not to give him additional work, just something instead that is more appropriate for him.

2. If possible try to include other students in some of his specially designed assignments.

3. Give student an opportunity to test out of some required work. He might be better off studying a different subject or enrolling in a different course.

4. Work with the student to plan a project he can work on in his spare time.

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PROBLEM

The gifted student, sometimes because he hurries to be the first one finished, does his work in a careless and sloppy fashion.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Discuss the problem with the student and jointly set up standards of work that will be acceptable.

2. If there are others whose work is careless involve them in a joint setting of standards. Be consistent in accepting only what meets the standards you jointly have set.

3. Find ways to recognize the carefully done work (by putting on bulletin boards, printing for distribution, etc.) and ignoring the work that is completed first unless it is according to standard.

4. If he hurries to be the first one finished, try to find ways to build his self-concept so that he won't need this type of recognition.

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PROBLEM

The gifted student refuses to work on drill activities which he feels he does not need, e.g. handwriting, arithmetic facts.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Provide samples of high quality work in his needed drill area for him to compare with his own work.

2. Jointly set up a standard which, when he achieves it, will signify that further drill will not be needed.

3. Give him options as to when he can work on his drill activities. He may prefer to do the practice at home rather than miss interesting activities at school.

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PROBLEM

The gifted student has extremely high standards of perfection and spends an inappropriate amount of time on his assignments.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Discuss the problem with him and jointly set up a scale of appropriate times to spend on assignments. Ask him to record the time spent on each assignment. Use this as the basis for your joint evaluation of his work.

2. Through the use of a variety of activities, planned by you so that he will be successful, try to develop his self-concept so that his secure ego will allow him to be less than perfect sometimes.

3. Discuss this matter with his parents and encourage them to help him to feel more secure.

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## PROBLEM

The gifted student refuses to do in-depth work, preferring the assignments which are extremely simple.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Ask him to serve on a committee to plan optional assignments. Include on the committee class members who are creative and enjoy challenging work.

2. Arrange group assignments and include him in a group of students who get satisfaction from in-depth study.

3. Occasionally give simple assignments.

4. Work with a committee with him as a member to set up standards for types of assignments.

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## PROBLEM

The gifted student enthusiastically volunteers for many projects but does not complete them.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Set up a time when a project is to be completed.

2. Help him plan a project that can be completed rather easily.

3. Monitor (or set up a monitoring system) progress on the project.

4. Encourage informal progress reports.

5. Reinforce completion of each project.

6. Do not accept his offer to start another project until each previous one is completed.

7. Offer to help toward the end of the project if he is bogged down.

8. Speak to his parents about the necessity for completing activities at home.

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# SECTION THREE

# SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF GIFTED STUDENTS

PROBLEM

The gifted student acts in a belligerent fashion when he does not get his own way.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Speak to him about the necessity for all students to have chances for their ideas to be used.

2. Discuss a system of tallying with him in order to demonstrate how often he acts in a belligerent fashion.

3. Make sure that the student understands which of his actions reveal his demands for his own way.

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## PROBLEM

The gifted student acts in a super-sophisticated manner, seemingly daring his teachers to just try to teach him something.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Enlist the help of this student and others to plan a unit and share in the teaching of it. (He may very well have some very useful ideas.)

2. Re-examine the curriculum to see if his classes are sufficiently challenging for him.

3. He should be given chances to test out of various units and given appropriate alternate assignments.

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PROBLEM

A gifted student does not like to have his reading lessons with children in an advanced grade.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Find out from the child what aspect of the lesson he does not like and investigate modification of the lesson if feasible.

2. Investigate possibility of his having his reading lesson with another group working at his reading level.

3. It may be necessary for the child to do individualized reading in own room.

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## PROBLEM

The gifted student polarizes the class through socially destructive methods.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Design opportunities for the student to gain social approval from his classmates.

2. Teach the class the Creative Problem Solving process and then make use of it whenever a controversy comes up in the class. The student might be helped to learn how to conduct the Creative Problem Solving sessions and thus change his polarizing attitude to a cooperative attitude.

3. Re-examine the student's educational program in order to decide if it is sufficiently challenging. If not, make appropriate changes.

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## PROBLEM

The gifted student refuses to do an assignment unless he will receive a grade for it. In some cases he might do the assignment but in a very careless, haphazard fashion.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Hold a class discussion about grades: why they are necessary, when they are needed and when they are not needed.

2. Consider using various methods of evaluation other than grades. Perhaps comments will be more satisfactory.

3. Discuss the problem with the student and ask for his ideas for evaluating assignments.

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PROBLEM

A gifted student refuses to participate in community activities.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Ask him to be a member of a planning committee whose job it is to work with community projects.

2. The student has the right to choose his extra-curricular activities and in many cases his decisions should be respected.

3. The student might be encouraged to find out who the community agency serves, how, and why.

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PROBLEM

A gifted student acts much less mature than his classmates because he is a year younger than they.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Study his achievement test results with those of his classmates to see if he has some areas in which he needs help to bring him to the level of his class.

2. If his achievement is superior to his colleagues reduce his assignments if he appears to be tense about them.

3. Excuse him from social responsibilities that might be more than he can easily handle.

4. If his problem is severe it might be suggested that he work with a school counselor and perhaps design a program where he will take two years to do a year's work and thus re-enter his chronological age group.

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PROBLEM

The student prefers solitary activities to those which involve other students.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Observe student in an attempt to discover if his desire for solitary activities is caused by morbid withdrawal (fear of participating with others because he might not succeed) or healthy solitude (when he prefers a solitary activity to group participation).

2. If his withdrawal appears to be due to fear, consult with psychologist and counselor for careful testing and recommendations.

3. It is important that the student be given opportunities to succeed in group experiences. Plans should be carefully made so that the students he works with are very supportive and that the topic is one in which he has some expertise.

4. Use a sociogram to help you decide on a student with whom he can be paired for certain activities.

5. Encourage him to continue with some of his solitary activities. Work toward a healthy balance.

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PROBLEM

The gifted student acts in an arrogant manner toward his classmates.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Discuss this problem with him in an attempt to help him realize what he is doing and how he is causing his classmates to be unhappy.

2. Discuss this problem with his parents in order to gain their cooperation.

3. Provide many opportunities for many members of class to receive recognition.

4. Program him with other gifted children so he can realize that he is not the only able student in the school.

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PROBLEM

The gifted student often misses school through feigning illness.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Discuss this problem with his parents in order to be sure that his illnesses are not actual. It might be necessary for him to have a complete physical examination.

2. Try to find out why he prefers to miss school and design a plan for remedying the problem. He may need help in completing his assignments if unfinished assignments are the cause.

3. Encourage student to help plan activities which will be held in the classes.

4. It might be necessary to counsel his parents so that they will not allow him to stay home without good reason.

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PROBLEM

The gifted student is so anxious to please and to be perfect that he shows many signs of nervousness.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Provide many opportunities for student to earn your approval and also the approval of the class other than signs of perfect work.

2. Cut down on his assignments so that he will feel less pressure to be perfect.

3. Schedule him into some "purely for fun" activities with a few easy-going students.

4. Discuss this problem with his parents and urge them to accept less than perfect behavior.

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PROBLEM

The gifted student acts as the class jester and spends much energy getting his classmates to pay attention to him.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Provide many opportunities for him to gain recognition from his class members for positive activities. He could be a leader in a group, be on a planning committee for a party, etc.

2. Discuss the problem with the student and help him to realize that his acting as the buffoon in the class prevents many of his classmates from getting to know his many fine qualities.

3. Encourage him to use some of his abilities to produce something special such as a provocative newspaper article, a poem or an artistic project.

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5. _____

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PROBLEM

The gifted student refuses to help classmates with their assignments.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Determine why student does not want to help his classmate.

2. If his reason is important to him it might be wise not to pursue this demand on his time.

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PROBLEM

A gifted student is withdrawing from physical education activities because he does so poorly in them.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Work out an exchange program with a teacher in the grade beneath yours where a few of your less able phy.ed. students will have their phy.ed. with the younger children and an equal number of the younger children will join your class.

2. Divide your students into phy.ed. squads occasionally according to physical ability so that they practice on needed skills.

3. Try to avoid competitive games for a time until the student has regained his confidence.

4. Encourage his family to find out-of-school satisfying physical activities for him.

5. _____

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6. _____

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PROBLEM

The student possesses leadership abilities so superior to his classmates that he is so often chosen to be the leader in school activities that others do not have a chance.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Work out a schedule and make assignments of all students to positions of leadership.

2. Work out a system of revolving phy.ed. squad captains.

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## PROBLEM

A gifted student is ridiculed by his classmates for being smart.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Carefully observe his classroom behavior to determine what he does that causes the ridicule.

2. Meet with the student to discuss your findings with him.

3. It may be necessary to have a class meeting to discuss a problem. It might be wise to disguise the problem so that he will not receive additional ridicule.

4. Provide opportunities for the student to work with groups of students who have similar mental ability, even though it might mean leaving his classroom for short periods.

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## PROBLEM

The gifted student brings contraband items to school to get his classmates' attention.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Meet with the student and see if he can determine the reasons why specific items are contraband.

2. Design a number of projects or activities for the student so that he can gain the social approval of his classmates.

3. If the problem persists, confer with his parents and plan some joint action.

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5. _____

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## PROBLEM

A gifted student is known to be giving away dollars to encourage friendships and also often takes things.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Observe the student and gather data to be sure that you have accurate information.

2. Design some experiences so that the student will receive social approval from his classmates.

3. Discuss this problem with a counselor, psychologist, his last year's teacher, the principal and others knowledgeable in this area and design a plan to solve his problem.

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PROBLEM

A gifted student has emotional problems of such severity that he is unable to function in his regular class.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Discuss matter with school counselor, principal, psychologist, or other people knowledgeable in this area and follow their advice.

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PROBLEM

A gifted student is so hyperactive that neither he nor his classmates can function well in class.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Discuss the problem with his former teacher, the principal, psychologist, his parents and others who can help you design a program to help alleviate the problem.

2. A possibility to consider might be operant conditioning wherein he receives a reward for every period of non-disturbance.

3. He might require a shorter school day with a gradual increase in time at school.

4. His assignments should be examined so that adjustments can be made where necessary.

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PROBLEM

The gifted student tries to mononolize class discussions.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Hold a number of lessons on class discussions. Stress the necessity for allowing all to participate.

2. Ask the class to decide on how many comments should be the maximum for one person per session.

3. Whenever a student exceeds the maximum he should be asked to step out of that particular discussion.

4. Offer students many opportunities to hold small group discussions.

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PROBLEM

The gifted student uses his verbal ability to argue with the teacher and his classmates.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Teach class the rules for debating.

2. Whenever student initiates an argument record his point of view, ask for a volunteer to take the opposite point of view and schedule a debate. Insist that the debaters prepare carefully for the debate. Give them sufficient time for preparation.

3. Hold the debate in class. Ask a well-qualified person to judge the debate.

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PROBLEM

The gifted student reads at his desk instead of paying attention to class activities.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Study the class activities in order to decide if they are interesting and challenging to a gifted student.

2. It might be a wise choice for him to be excused from paying attention to a lesson too simple for him. Perhaps he should be excused from the room during these activities.

3. Make arrangements for him to participate in challenging classroom activities.

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PROBLEM

The gifted student pretends he does not know something or does poorly on written work in order to gain the respect of his classmates.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Design experiences for the student so he can gain the social approval of his classmates.

2. Be careful not to praise him for his mental ability in front of the class.

3. Arrange for him to have some short term or long term classes with students with mental ability similar to his.

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## PROBLEM

The gifted student possesses advanced knowledge of a school related subject but refuses to give a report to the class.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Ask him if there is another way that he would enjoy sharing his knowledge with the class.

2. Student has the right to choose not to give an extra report.

3. Perhaps the student might like to substitute his interest report for a required assignment.

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PROBLEM

A gifted student's attitude in school is one of general boredom.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Carefully examine student's daily schedule and compare it with achievement and intelligence testing results to decide if he needs more challenging work.

2. Invite student to test out of various units (and perhaps some classes) to ensure that his studies are not too simple for him.

3. If you find that his classwork is appropriate for his mental level then give open-ended assignments.

4. Ask student to be a member of a committee to plan assignments for a unit.

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# SECTION FOUR

# PARENTAL PROBLEMS OF GIFTED STUDENTS

## PROBLEM

The gifted student has parents who show no interest in their child's schoolwork or activities.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. In a conference with the parents emphasize how few people are born with their child's intellectual ability. Without mentioning his actual I.Q. one could say something like this:

> "Only one person in one hundred has a mental ability like your child's." (I.Q. of 136) This Table may be interesting to you.

| The child whose IQ is: | is equalled or excelled by: |
|---|---|
| 160 ..... | 1 out of 10,000 |
| 156 ..... | 3 out of 10,000 |
| 152 ..... | 8 out of 10,000 |
| 148 ..... | 2 out of 1,000 |
| 144 ..... | 4 out of 1,000 |
| 140 ..... | 7 out of 1,000 |
| 130 ..... | 2 out of 100 |
| 125 ..... | 6 out of 100 |
| 120 ..... | 11 out of 100 |

2. Help the parents to see that a gift like their child's must be nurtured and encouraged.

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## PROBLEM

The gifted student has parents who give him an inordinate number of chores at home making it difficult for him to complete his homework. Sometimes he may be forced to miss school due to babysitting responsibilities.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Please refer to page 48 for information that should be useful in explaining the great gift that their child possesses. He must have a steady, thorough education in order to build a strong foundation for his future.

2. Try to help the parents to realize that time for him to complete his homework and perfect school attendance must not be denied to their children.

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## PROBLEM

The gifted student has parents who are anti-intellectual and are anxious that their child get a job as soon as possible.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Please refer to page 48 on a suggestion to help the parents understand their child's ability.

2. Help the parents to understand that a thorough education including college may well help him to succeed in an extremely desirable kind of work.

3. Discuss this matter with the student and give him some ideas on how he can use his interests in a lifetime occupation.

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## PROBLEM

The gifted student has parents who are not satisfied with anything their child does that is not perfect.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Discuss this problem with the parents and help them to understand that extremely high demands on anyone often can make the person unable to function in a healthy manner. A gifted child usually wants to do well, he enjoys a challenge because he has succeeded in the past. He needs a supporting, complimentary environment. Even though he may not be perfect in everything he still is a most worthwhile person.

2. It might be advisable to work out a plan with the parents so they can conscientiously find ways to honestly accept their child's less than perfect achievements.

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## PROBLEM

The gifted child has parents who do not conscientiously follow an adequate optical, dental and physical care regime for their child.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. In a parent group conference stress the vital part that adequate sleep and breakfasts play in a productive school experience.

2. Teach a health unit if possible and as part of it ask the children to keep exact records of their hours of sleep and breakfast menus. This could well be followed up with a general report to parents about the results. (A class newspaper report might be less threatening to the parents than a letter from the teacher.

3. If you have evidence that the student's parents are deficient in their health care it might be wise to ask the school nurse to meet with the parents.

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PROBLEM

The gifted student has parents who do not demand that their child be responsible for completing tasks.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. In a parent conference help the parents to realize how vitally important it is that their child learn to be a responsible worker. Perhaps you and they can design a cooperative plan of simple rewards (probably oral rather than material) for each completed task. It probably would be wise to assign a minimum of tasks at first with gradual increase as the program becomes successful.

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## PROBLEM

A gifted student has parents who have babied him to such an extent that his inability to do a number of simple tasks has caused his classmates to laugh at him.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Discuss this matter with his parents and help them to develop a plan for encouraging their child to be independent of them. Stress the importance of their being absolutely consistent.

2. Find opportunities to quietly reward (by look or word) every sign of his independence that you observe in school.

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## PROBLEM

A gifted student has siblings whose ability is superior to his and this fact is often discussed at home. The reverse situation where his ability is superior to his siblings is also a problem.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. In a conference with the parents stress the harm that could be inadvertently done by praising one child. It is very difficult for a child to grow up feeling he is either superior or inferior to his siblings. It gets in the way of developing a loving relationship within a family. It is most helpful if parents can realize that each child has a number of fine qualities and that it is most unfair (and destructive) to in any way compare these qualities.

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PROBLEM

A gifted student has a family situation where he has almost no contact with his father and his mother dominates his experiences at home.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Try to arrange for student to have positive educational and recreational experiences with men on the staff. Perhaps he could have one or more lessons per week with a group of children in one of the male teacher's rooms.

2. If the father is in the home try to encourage him to have some special regular activity with his son.

3. Encourage the student to participate in community activities where he would come in contact with men and boys.

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## PROBLEM

A gifted student has parents who want school to be more open and follow a "free school" philosophy.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Encourage the parents to do an extensive study of neighboring free schools and to spend as much time as possible observing the schools. It often is advisable to spend a whole school day following a child and keeping a record of everything he does during the day. Then invite the parent to do the same thing at their student's school.

2. After they have gained a great deal of data, try to visit the school they recommend yourself.

3. Discuss with your principal the possibility of incorporating some aspects of the "free school" into your school. Perhaps a one hour "free choice" period per week could be tried or some other adjustment.

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## PROBLEM

The gifted student has parents who have catered to their child's mental gift to such an extent that he has an arrogant attitude toward others.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Discuss this matter with the parents and help them to understand that their child's gifts are important only if he is able to make wise use of them. If he antagonizes other people he will be prevented from having the happy life which often is the very foundation for success.

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## PROBLEM

The gifted student has parents who pressure the school to double-promote their child.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Carefully study test results, and evidence of social and emotional maturity of the student.

2. Discuss the matter with the principal, school psychologist, counselor, and other experts in this area.

3. Find out something about the child's friends. Are they all older than he?

4. Share this accumulation of information with the parents. It might be the best solution for him to be double-promoted. If there is some doubt it might be a good idea to table the question for 6 months or a year and then open it up for further discussion.

5. An important factor to remember is that many children do very well being a year younger when they are in elementary school but the junior and senior high years are filled with agony because they are too immature. It is also very difficult to gracefully have them repeat a year.

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PROBLEM

The gifted student has parents who usually find fault with the school and share their observations with their child.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. In a conference with the parents openly discuss their concerns about the school. Try to make changes whenever possible. Stress the need for the student to respect the school in order for him to care about his present and future education.

2. Follow up on the parents' suggestions for improvement whenever feasible. It is very possible that the parents have some justified complaints.

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## PROBLEM

The gifted student has parents who are so anxious for him to be popular that he is prevented from doing what he prefers in his free time.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. In a conference with the parents stress the values of a fine intellect, of the needs the student has to pursue his intellectual interests. Dr. Abraham Maslow's concept of a self-actualized person stresses that he probably has one or two close friends and has no need to be "popular". The student's personal needs and desires should be respected as much as possible.

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PROBLEM

The student has parents who are pressuring him to achieve to a degree which appears to be beyond his ability.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Discuss his achievement test results and your expectations for the student with the parents. Emphasize his strong points and try to alleviate their anxiety.

2. It may be possible to group the student with others of similar ability for some work so that he can receive some high grades.

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# SECTION FIVE

# INTELLECTUAL AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF GROUPS OF GIFTED STUDENTS

PROBLEM

A group of gifted students in the class are far superior intellectually to their classmates.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Study achievement test results of these students and administer reading and math diagnostic tests to them.

2. Work with this data to design some group classes in the areas in which they are most advanced.

3. Provide proper instructional materials at a level which will be challenging to them.

4. Provide many opportunities (perhaps science, social studies, art, music, and phy.ed.) where they will be in classes with all their classmates.

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## PROBLEM

A small group of gifted students have reading ability which is superior to that of their classmates.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. If this occurs in grades 4 to 6 follow the "Self-Managing Reading Group" plan which can be obtained from L. Hertz, #638, Capitol Square, St. Paul 55101.

2. Encourage the P.T.A. to hold a training session for Junior Great Books volunteer leaders and offer the course in school.

3. Design a reading class for this group.

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PROBLEM

A small group of gifted students possess creative writing ability that is superior to their classmates.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Meet with these students to jointly plan an activity embodying creative writing that they will enjoy. Do they want to start a newspaper, a magazine, a poetry book, a book of short stories, write and produce a play, an operetta, etc?

2. Help them to set up a time schedule and responsibilities.

3. Cooperate with the group by making arrangements for publication of their product. Sometimes parents are happy to do the typing.

4. They might be excused from language lessons in areas they have already mastered.

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PROBLEM

A small group of gifted students possess spelling ability which is superior to that of their classmates.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Call the group together and ask them to help plan their spelling group activities.

2. They might choose to do two or three weeks' spelling words in one week. They might choose words to study instead of those they already know.

3. See that their plans are carefully worked out and help them to carefully carry them out.

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PROBLEM

A small group of gifted students have given evidence that their thinking is much more creative than their classmates.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Teach them the Creative Problem Solving Process which can be obtained from L. Hertz, #638, Capitol Square, St. Paul 55101, and encourage them to use this to solve various problems they identify.

2. Encourage them to teach the total class the Creative Problem Solving Process.

3. Encourage all members of the class to do creative thinking.

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PROBLEM

A small group of gifted students possess math ability which is superior to that of their classmates.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Administer an appropriate math diagnostic test to these students.

2. Study math achievement test scores of these students along with their diagnostic math test results.

3. Design a math curriculum for this group of students which will be appropriate for their ability. It might be necessary for them to have learning materials different from those usually taught in your grade so discuss this matter with the principal.

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## PROBLEM

A group of gifted students is registered in an independent study course and the students are completing their work hurriedly and carelessly.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Call the group together and jointly set standards for the course. It is important that they realize that Independent Study is reserved only for those who are willing to maintain the standards.

2. Periodic scheduled conferences should be held with each student in order to monitor and evaluate his progress. At these times it might be wise to make some changes in the overall plan.

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PROBLEM

A small group of gifted students has developed a disdainful attitude toward their less capable classmates.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Schedule a number of discussion sessions with these students in order to help them to become more sensitive to the needs of all people.

2. An important aspect of these sessions would be to help them to realize that they did not earn their ability, that they just happened to receive some gifts. A crucial question for them to face is, "How do they propose to use their ability?"

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## PROBLEMS

A small group of gifted students monopolize classroom discussions.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Please see page 42 which has suggestions for one-person discussion monopolizers.

2. Have small group discussions. If all of the usual monopolizers make up a group they might quickly realize how difficult it is to have people monopolize discussions. After a few of these sessions this group might be willing to set some standards for discussions.

3. Another benefit of having the usual monopolizers in one group is that other groups will begin to develop more discussants.

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PROBLEM

A group of parents of gifted children is pressuring the school district to start an "open" or "free school."

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Please see page 57 and adapt ideas for an individual parent's interest in a "free school" to this problem.

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PROBLEM

A number of gifted students have joined forces and are deliberately becoming disruptive in class.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Re-examine the types of assignments these students are given and compare their test results with their school experiences. Is their work challenging enough? Are they able to do the investigative, in-depth kind of projects in which they would be interested? Is the work so dull and boring to them that their disruptive activities are giving them the excitement they crave?

2. Incorporate this group of students in a planning meeting so they can develop some projects in which they can use their creative energy.

3. If the curriculum adjustments are not necessary or successful it might be necessary to meet with them to reset standards for classroom behavior.

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# SECTION SIX

# STAFF RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS OF TEACHERS OF GIFTED STUDENTS

PROBLEM

Solutions to a gifted student's school problems involve the cooperation of other teachers. This cooperation is not forthcoming.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Ask the principal for suggestions on how to obtain the teachers' cooperation.

2. Ask the other teachers if they have some suggestions which you might use instead.

3. Develop other solutions which do not involve other teachers.

4. Develop other solutions which involve teachers who are more receptive to the plan.

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PROBLEM

A number of possible solutions to problems recognized in teaching have been submitted to the administration but no action is forthcoming.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Ask for a conference with the administration in order to provide a rationale and clarify the suggested solutions.

2. Ask the administration if there are any aspects of the solutions which they feel should be eliminated or redesigned.

3. Solicit other possible solutions to the problem from the administration.

4. Identify models of programs similar to suggested solutions so they can be visited.

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## PROBLEM

A gifted student's needs have been diagnosed and a number of possible adjustments in his program have been made to the administration but approval of any one adjustment has not been given.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Ask for a conference with the administration to provide a rationale and clarify the suggested adjustments.

2. Discuss the problem with the school counselor, social worker and/or psychologist for input in order to redesign the suggested adjustment.

3. If the counselor, social worker and/or psychologist approve of the suggested adjustments, ask them to relay their support to the administration.

4. If the administration refuses to accept all of the suggestions, ask for their help in developing some other ideas.

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## PROBLEM

The teachers and administration approve of a suggested solution to a problem recognized in a gifted student (or a group of gifted students) but the superintendent does not support the plan.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

1. Use a different approach in presenting the proposal to the superintendent.

2. Ask the principal to discuss the proposal with the superintendent and find out if he has a plan that could be substituted.

3. Develop some alternative proposals to submit to the superintendent.

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